

Top Secret

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Monday 20 March 1978

CG NIDC 78/065C

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NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION
Unauthorized Disclosure Subject to Criminal Sanctions

DIA review(s) completed.

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State Dept. review completed

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Monday, 20 March 1978.

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The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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China

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ISRAEL-LEBANON: Military Sitrep

25X1 [redacted] //The Israelis expanded military operations in Lebanon over the weekend with the aim of clearing Palestinian forces from the remainder of the area south of the Litani River.

25X1 [redacted] [redacted] The UN, meanwhile, has adopted a resolution to send a UN force into southern Lebanon. Arab hard-liners are meeting in Damascus to discuss the Israeli action, and the Arab League secretary general has called for a summit.//

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[redacted]

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25X1 [redacted] //Israeli military authorities say that their troops have met little resistance and that Palestinian forces south of the Litani are collapsing.// Israeli Chief of Staff General Gur, indicated that the operations were in response to continued shelling of Israeli border settlements from areas outside Israeli control.

25X1 [redacted] //Israeli authorities told the US Army attache in Tel Aviv that their units will halt on the heights running along the coastal plain, some 3 to 5 kilometers from the shore, and will stay out of the port city of Tyre. The forces will thus be out of range of direct fire from Tyre and other villages along the coastal plain. The Israeli Navy apparently will continue to patrol offshore.//

25X1 [redacted] Farther north, the Israelis apparently intend to reach the high ground overlooking the Litani River; from there they will be able to block guerrilla infiltration into the south and keep Palestinian positions to the north under observation.

[redacted]

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[redacted]

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[] The Arab states are engaged in a flurry of political activity aimed at putting up a show of resisting the Israeli invasion, although they may have been preempted by the UN Security Council's adoption of a resolution yesterday calling for an Israeli withdrawal and the introduction of a UN force in southern Lebanon.

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[] The foreign and defense ministers of Algeria, Libya, and South Yemen, as well as representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization, arrived in Damascus yesterday, at Syria's invitation, to discuss a means of "defeating the Israeli aggression." The conferees, however, will probably fail to make concrete decisions and may fall to wrangling. Libya, for instance, has made known its objection to a UN force, while Syria supports the UN resolution.

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[] As the hard-liners meet in Damascus, other Arab states are trying for a less radical approach to the problem. Jordan has sent representatives to several Arab states, presumably to pursue King Husayn's call for an Arab summit.

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[] The Arab League secretary general called for a summit meeting on Saturday and hopes to convene it this week. Eight states have thus far responded favorably; a majority of the 21-member Arab League is required to convene a summit.

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ISRAEL: Begin's Popularity Up

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[] *Bolstered by a resurgence in personal popularity, Israeli Prime Minister Begin arrives in Washington today probably convinced that he is in a much stronger position to deal*

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[REDACTED]

with the US than he was just two weeks ago. In the short run, his stand on peace negotiations is likely to be affected less by what the US administration says or does than by what he learns firsthand concerning the amount of support he can still count on among American Jews and Israel's supporters in Congress.

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[REDACTED] As A result of the Palestinian terrorist raid and Israel's subsequent intervention in southern Lebanon, the Begin government is no longer under fire at home for mishandling US-Israeli relations and peace negotiations with Egypt. Dissension within the Israeli cabinet has quickly faded into the background, and nearly all of the country's political parties have rallied behind the government.

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[REDACTED] Only a few Israelis question the wisdom of Israeli forces remaining in Lebanon. Indeed, the Israeli public not only wholeheartedly supports the move but is convinced that it will not jeopardize peace negotiations.

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[REDACTED] Begin doubtless will seek to turn recent events, including this show of domestic solidarity, to his advantage during his visit to Washington. With the consequences of the Palestinian raid still fresh in the US public mind, Begin is likely to make a strong pitch for understanding and support for his negotiating stance--especially his opposition to an independent Palestinian state. In private meetings with US officials he may also hope to focus primarily on resolving the Lebanese problem and to give short shrift to the broader issues affecting peace negotiations.

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[REDACTED] Begin has made it clear in his public statements that he will not moderate his peace plan. At most, he and Foreign Minister Dayan, who will accompany him, are likely to offer some cosmetic changes in the text of the statement of principles currently under discussion. They also may seek to paper over the differences that have emerged between Israel and the US over UN Security Council Resolution 242.

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[REDACTED]

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25X1 [] The Israelis remain unsure of Egyptian President Sadat's minimum conditions for moving ahead with bilateral negotiations and still appear to cling to the hope that he will be prepared to conclude a separate peace agreement if satisfactory wording can be worked out on the statement of principles. Dayan, for example, implied that Sadat has softened his stand in the past few weeks and now no longer appeared to be insisting on direct Jordanian participation before political negotiations can resume.

25X1 [] Hints that Begin will withdraw his offer to return all of the Sinai to Egypt if his peace plan is rejected continue to appear occasionally in the Israeli press and in statements by government officials. These warnings presumably are aimed at obtaining some tactical leverage in the current situation and at probing Sadat's intentions. []

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CHINA-US: Improving Relations

25X1 [] //Chinese party Chairman Hua Kuo-feng outlined Chinese policy toward the US last month at the National People's Congress and expressed Peking's willingness "to expand contacts between the peoples of the two countries and promote mutual understanding and friendship." This statement is the first top-level acknowledgment of the decision Peking evidently made late last year to promote forward movement in several aspects of its relations with the US despite the continued impasse over the Taiwan issue.//

25X1 [] //Peking has sought to expand contacts with US diplomats and defense attaches abroad in recent weeks. Substantive exchanges between senior US and Chinese diplomats in Mali and Syria occurred for the first time earlier this month. In Poland, the Chinese Ambassador solicited a courtesy call from the newly arrived US Ambassador and said that "broader contacts" between the two embassies could be discussed.//

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25X1 [] //Discussion between a US defense attache in Yugoslavia and a Chinese counterpart at the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade in mid-January was the first such meeting we are aware of on official Chinese premises anywhere. In the past two months, Chinese military attaches have initiated social contacts with US attaches in a number of other capitals.//

25X1 [] //In January, the Chinese allowed four Americans--three active-duty military officers and a civilian with the Defense Department--to accompany a delegation from the Canadian National Defense College on a tour of Chinese military facilities. This was the first time the US had participated in exchanges of a purely military nature between China and another country. Chinese officials indicated at the conclusion of the visit that the US could participate in future exchanges with the Defense College.//

25X1 [] //Peking, however, is maintaining a "principled" position on occasions when protocol is involved. An invitation for the US Ambassador in Manila to attend a state dinner on 12 March for visiting Chinese Vice Premier Li Hsien-nien was withdrawn by the Philippines Government at the last minute--apparently at Chinese request.//

25X1 [] //The manner in which Peking handled the recent release of an ethnic Chinese US citizen arrested in 1970 for "intelligence activities and smuggling" is another demonstration of Peking's desire to promote progress in bilateral relations. In discussing this case, a Chinese official mentioned the special interest Ambassador Woodcock had shown in it and said "relations between our two countries are improving step by step; as our relations develop, these problems will be solved."//

25X1 [] //China's recent favorable response to a longstanding request for additional facilities for the US Liaison Office in Peking may be yet another indicator of Peking's effort to promote some forward movement in Sino-US relations.//

25X1 [] //Peking apparently expects US citizens to comprise a significant portion of the increased flow of tourists to China. The quasi-official China Travel Service recently informed US officials that it is planning for as many as 10,000 US citizens to visit this year. This figure does not include Americans officially invited to China. []

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NIGERIA: Voting Controversy

25X1 [] A serious controversy may be shaping up over Nigeria's recently completed voter registration campaign. The campaign is an important step in the military regime's plan to return the country to civilian rule by October 1979. There are indications that the registration figures--in effect a census--could fuel tribal and regional disputes, as have previous census exercises. In the past, Nigeria's competing ethnic groups have always seen such counts as determining their political weight in the government.

25X1 [] The federal electoral commission has the politically sensitive task of judging the acceptability of the registration results against the regional and tribal relationships established by the 1963 census, the only post-independence census to be officially accepted and the regime's benchmark for planning purposes. The final results of the census in 1973 were not accepted because the preliminary results caused political controversy.

25X1 [] The commission has announced only that the total of 48 million voters registered is 20 percent larger than projected. It has declined, pending "further revision" of the figures, to release registration totals for each of Nigeria's 19 states. The registration campaign ended last month.

25X1 [] This delay, along with the unexpected size of the electorate, suggests that the population has grown much more rapidly in one part of the country than in the others since the 1963 census. The commission's failure to announce state-by-state figures is likely to arouse popular suspicions that something is amiss and that the results are being manipulated. This could jeopardize the political acceptance of the figures when they are finally announced. Nigeria's three main ethnic groups, the Hausa Fulani, the Ibo, and the Yoruba, and various minority tribes have strong opinions about what the results ought to show. Each group is likely to oppose results that would place it at a disadvantage.

25X1 [] The voter registration may heighten Nigeria's traditional north-south differences. The population in some of the 10 states created from the former northern region has probably

grown disproportionately in size. The preliminary results of the 1973 census showed that nearly two-thirds of the population lived in the north and that four northern states, in which Nigeria's traditionally dominant Muslim Hausa Fulani group is preponderant, contained just over half of Nigeria's total population.

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[] The 1973 census was even more unacceptable to southern tribesmen than the 1963 version, which placed just over half the total population in the north and ensured continued political domination of the Hausa Fulani aristocracy. Controversy over the 1963 census was a contributing factor to the ethnic tension that led to the overthrow of the first civilian government in 1966 and to civil war a year later. []

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FRANCE: Election Results

[redacted] The unexpected heavy swing back to the center in yesterday's election will be widely interpreted in the coming months as a stunning refutation of Socialist leader Mitterand's theory that the Socialists can win by allying themselves with the Communists while controlling them through greater strength.

[redacted] Instead of winning the hundred or so seats in the National Assembly they expected, the Socialists won only a few. The Communists won 14 seats more than in the last elections--a gain equal to that of the Socialists.

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[] Mitterrand has already blamed the Communists for losing the election by their attacks on the Socialists. The end result of the polemics on the left was to frighten away potential Socialists voters in the white-collar middle class. Mitterrand's continued control over his party will depend on his ability to find an electoral perspective for the future. In any case, the Socialists face a lengthy period of internal acrimony and rethinking their goals.

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[] The Communist Party, having confirmed it near equality with the Socialists at the polls, probably will try to keep the Socialists allied with it by stressing the importance of left unity. At the same time, they are likely to reemphasize their democratic "Eurocommunist" identity in order to reassure the embittered Socialists.

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[] President Giscard's win provides him with the opportunity for bold measures to help overcome the polarization that still evenly divides France. When he addresses the nation of Wednesday, he is expected to name a new prime minister; he may choose popular and nonpartisan Health Minister Simone Veil or a prominent liberal Gaullist.

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[] Giscard will still face a difficult battle with Paris mayor Chirac for control of the National Assembly majority, now evenly split between Gaullists and Giscardians. In the past, Chirac seemed to be the last best hope for conservative Frenchmen in a rising tide of leftist sentiment. Although Chirac emerges weakened from the elections, he is still a powerful party leader, now, however, he is challenging a president who is at the peak of his popularity--and who may run for reelection in 1981.

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[] //Giscard is also likely to face immediate labor demands to be raised by the Communist unions. []

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BRIEFS

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China

25X1 [] Chinese Party Chairman Hua Kuo-feng opened a national science conference in Peking on Saturday that the New China News Agency described as the largest in the history of the nation's science and technology. Virtually the entire Peking-based membership of the Politburo attended the opening session. The 6,000 delegates will review Peking's priorities and plans for the development of science and technology to 1985.

25X1 [] Vice Premier Teng Hsiao-ping declared in his keynote speech that modernization of science and technology is the "crux" of China's effort to catch up with the West by the year 2000. Among other things, he directed party committees that are in charge of scientific activities to give scientists greater authority in deciding technical matters.

25X1 [] Teng also paid tribute to the help of "foreign friends." Just before the conference opened, the Chinese news agency reported the contributions of Chinese-American scientists to China's scientific research. []

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